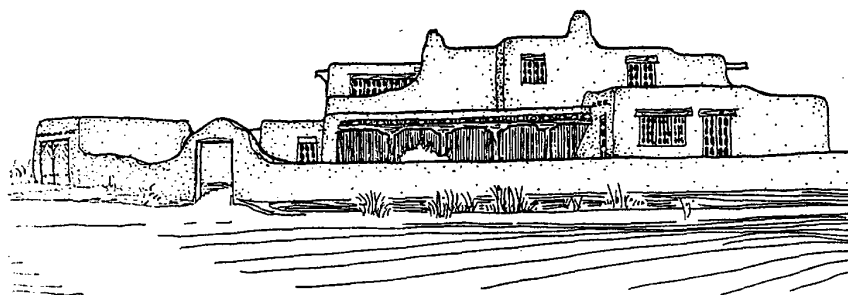


# SOURCES & SEARCHES

DOCUMENTING HISTORIC  
BUILDINGS IN NEW MEXICO

*Prepared for  
The New Mexico Historic Preservation Division,  
Office of Cultural Affairs  
by McHugh, Lloyd, Hand and Associates, AIA;  
Santa Fe/Albuquerque*



# SOURCES & SEARCHES

DOCUMENTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN NEW MEXICO

*Prepared for the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division by McHugh, Lloyd, Hand and Associates, AIA, Santa Fe/Albuquerque.*

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## PREFACE

This booklet was prepared to assist in the research of historic buildings, both in New Mexico and elsewhere.

If you plan to visit the archive centers and other resources listed here, take this booklet with you. You may like to cut the folded edges of some pages to open them, providing blank space in which to keep notes. Stapling or taping the bottom edge of a folded page will make a convenient pocket to hold photographs or other documents.

Inside the back cover is an appendix and checklist of other materials the Historic Preservation Division may have included for your reference. Enjoy the findings of your research, and happy hunting! ■

*COVER: The Carlos Vierra House, Santa Fe, 1917.  
Carlos Vierra, architect.*

# SOURCES

RESOURCES FOR  
RESEARCHING HISTORIC  
BUILDINGS

## WHY RESEARCH?

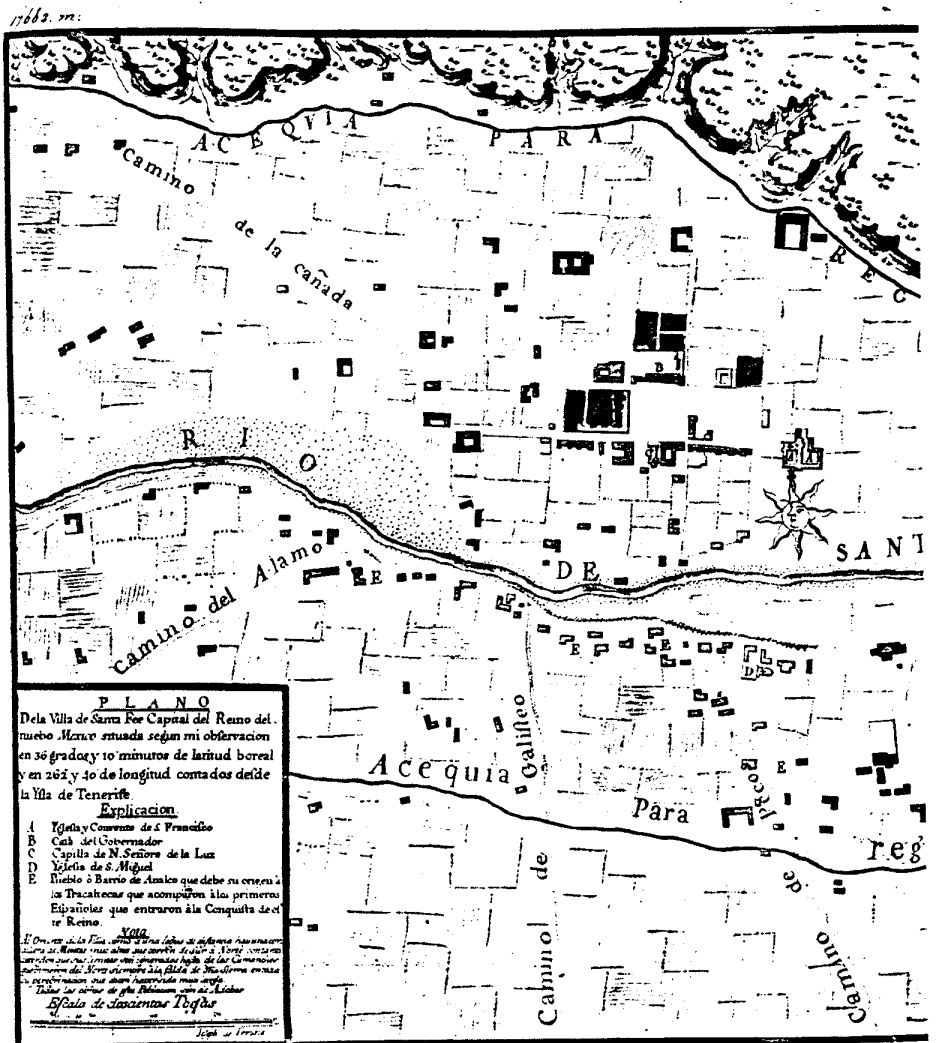
How old is this building and who built it? What did it originally look like? Who lived in it, and what changes did they make? These and many other questions can be answered by systematic research.

Historical research can be a complex process, but it can also be a great deal of fun. Because most people need assistance in historic research, this publication is prepared as a general guide; and although it is specific to New Mexico, the procedure and resources would be essentially the same anywhere.

Basic curiosity is a good reason to do research on the history of a building, but there can be other reasons as well. Good documentation is vital in restoration or rehabilitation, both of which can increase property value. Perhaps the building merits nomination to the State Register of Cultural Properties, or to the National Register of Historic Places. Maybe work on the building would be eligible for state or federal preservation tax credits.

The material outlined here will help in historical research on a building; at the same time, there can be no assurance of finding answers to all of your questions, for existing documentation varies widely. But almost surely, something will be discovered which will lead to something else! Keep your findings well organized: timelines or chronological scrapbooks are useful means.

DETAIL OF THE JOSEPH DE URRUTIA MAP OF SANTA FE, 1766-68  
This is the earliest known map of New Mexico's capitol city. Museum of  
New Mexico History Library.



## PUBLIC RECORDS

Record centers open to the public are a good place to begin researching a building's history. They contain a variety of indispensable resources, including deeds, titles, and building permits. Especially in more remote rural areas of New Mexico, maintaining records has been regarded rather casually until recently, so not all communities can produce every kind of documentation. The most helpful and frequently available resources are listed here.

### DEEDS, PLATS AND TITLES

Old properties have usually changed ownership several times, and working backwards through a *chain of title* will reveal the entire succession of owners. (This can get confusing, though fascinating, during the early days of sometimes-conflicting land grants in New Mexico.) Transfer of property is recorded with a legal document called a *deed* and this is often (especially more recently) accompanied by a *plat*, or surveyed map of the property. While the title may or may not describe buildings on the land, the chain of title is the first step in knowing who owned the property and when. Real estate companies are skilled in *title searches* (for a fee), but homeowners can also do this work themselves. Copies of deeds, plats and titles are maintained in county record centers, where they are closely linked with *tax assessment records*. For older and especially significant properties, original copies of these documents may also be found in historical museums or libraries.

### BUILDING PERMITS

Building permits are a fairly recent phenomenon; in rural areas in particular, construction is still often undertaken without them. Building permits reflect the establishment and enforcement of local or state building codes, and are usually kept on file with the city or township. They show the nature of construction, the builder, the owner, perhaps the cost, and the architect, if there was one. If you are lucky, copies of architectural plans may also be found on file with permits. Remember, however, that all work for which permits were issued may not have been completed, or that it may have taken several years. Though useful, permits are not infallible as sources for exact dating.

Nº 2  
31<sup>st</sup> May 1873  
Cañon de Chama Grant  
Mr Anthony Joseph  
to  
Mr Henry Blackmore  
Copy—  
letter engaging to  
extend time for sale of  
Grant to 15<sup>th</sup> June 1873  
MS0103 &

CHAMA LAND SALE MANUSCRIPT  
Blackmore Collection, Museum of New Mexico History Library.

### TAX RECORDS

Tax assessments on a property are an excellent way to determine when a building was constructed or enlarged, for they usually describe land and any buildings on it in general terms. A substantial increase in the taxable value in a given year probably reflects the date of original construction, or major improvement, additions or remodeling. Note: though the *title* may be in the wife's name, tax records usually appear under the male head of household, so both should be consulted. Tax records are maintained in county offices in New Mexico; an appointment and explanation of your purpose may be required to review these very useful documents.

### CITY DIRECTORIES

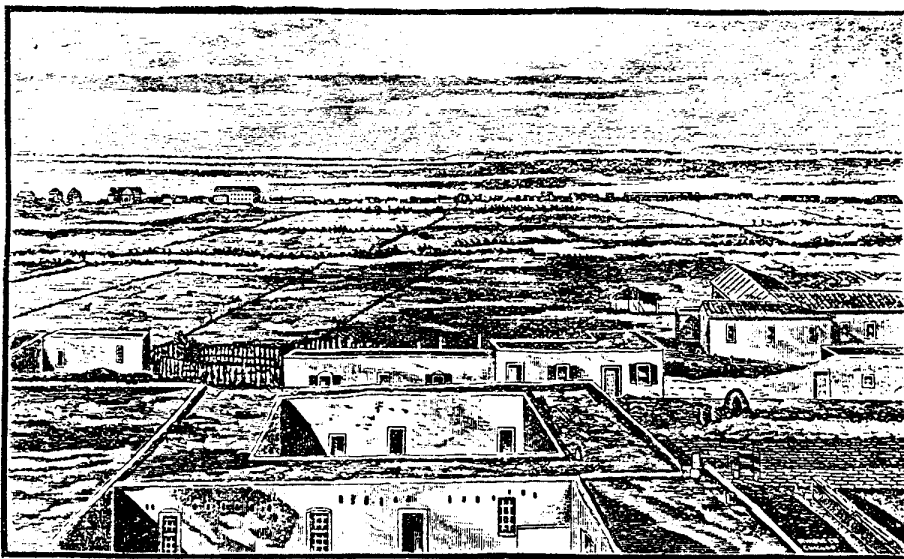
City and business directories began in the 1880s in New Mexico, as something like today's telephone directories. They are found in libraries, local and state historical societies, and city reference centers. Published annually or every few years, they list individuals or businesses by address and/or alphabetically. Particularly where indexed by street address (which may sometimes change), city directories can reveal the succession of ownership or occupancy of individual buildings or entire neighborhoods.

### CENSUSES

The official statistical accounting of population, housing and other data is represented in a census. Though infrequently kept in New Mexico before 1910, and sometimes of doubtful accuracy in more recent times, the official census can reveal how a building was used, and by whom. Copies of historical censuses can be found in public and academic libraries.

### WILLS

Wills are legal documents which describe how an individual wishes to dispose of possessions at the time of death. Although not everyone leaves a will, those which exist are filed with the jurisdictional probate court. Wills include not only descriptions of buildings and land, but also other property and assets. They can help unravel the *chain of title*, as well as lend an understanding of the broader social and economic position of the owner.



LAS VEGAS IN 1880.  
Looking East. Showing First Las Vegas in the Distance.

LAS VEGAS IN 1880.  
H. T. Wilson, Museum of New Mexico  
(No. 70250)

## ARCHIVES

Archives and libraries are unrivaled repositories of information helpful in the research of historical buildings. In addition to the resources listed here, various types of maps, plans, and architectural drawings are also found in archives. Because archival collections are so diverse and complicated, assistance from the staff will probably be required; but they will almost always share your enthusiastic interest.

### PHOTOGRAPHS

Early photographers in the American West began recording the curiosities of local building practice by the 1870s. Local historical societies may have photographs of interest; however, the collection and cataloging of thousands of photographs is a complex affair, and only in a few places will they be sufficiently organized to be easily accessible. The best photo archive in the state is in the History Division of the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe.

Although it may be difficult to locate photographs of individual buildings, street scenes may include the building you are looking for, and small areas of photographs can be enlarged to explore details.



CARPENTER GOTHIC PORCH, Galisteo.  
New Mexico Office of Historic Preservation

### NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

Early newspapers had few illustrations, but their text are often illuminating to research. Later, as more complex printing processes became routine, more illustrations appeared, and these too can be helpful. Newspapers tend to focus on people, rather than buildings, so the reference file according to building owners should be checked. Files often include an obituary relating particulars of the family and, sometimes, property. Reports of disasters, such as fires, were hot news items then, as now.

Newspaper records will usually be found on microfilm or microfiche cards, and some system of indexing and retrieving back articles often exists. Both archives and newspaper companies themselves can be valuable sources.

Old copies of magazines and other periodicals can also be helpful, and are usually more extensively illustrated. Sometimes a local history has been published, and real estate developers may have produced promotional brochures. Indexing systems vary, but the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* is a standard source.

### POSTCARDS, MANUSCRIPTS AND MEMORABILIA

There is no telling what you might find in this department, from children's toys to old love letters, but local historical societies are especially rich in this type of material. Staff members or curators can give an idea of what the collections include, and will assist in locating relevant items.

# MAPS AND PLANS

In addition to official plats, other types of maps may be useful in historic research. These may show building locations, sometimes a sort of "view," and occasionally even construction materials. These can be found in archive centers and history libraries.

## BIRD'S EYE VIEW DRAWINGS

During the 1880s and 1890s, Bird's Eye View drawings were made of some of the more important towns and cities in the West. In New Mexico, these are known to exist for Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Las Vegas, and Socorro.

Popular during the era of railroad expansion, these aerial perspective "maps" are impressive in their accuracy and are wonderful to study. They show not only the placement and configuration of streets and buildings, but the character of roofs, porches and entire neighborhoods during this fascinating period of western history.

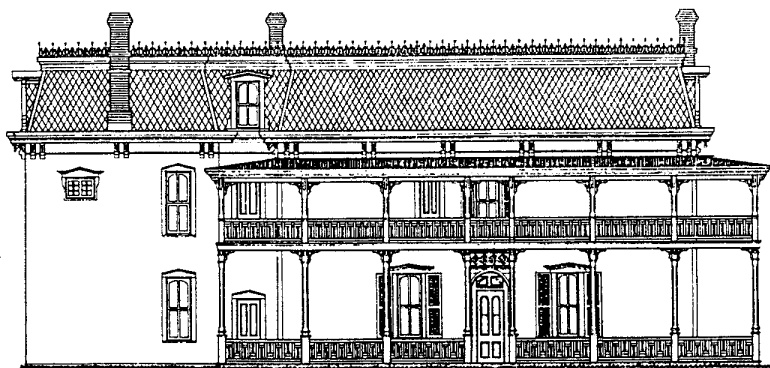
## SANBORN INSURANCE MAPS

Beginning around 1890, the Sanborn Insurance Map Company produced detailed maps of several larger New Mexico towns for use by various fire insurance companies. These were updated periodically until about 1970. The maps are fairly detailed, showing the outlines of buildings, the number of stories, and construction materials. They can be instrumental in identifying when buildings were first put on the site,



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF  
LAS VEGAS, N.M.  
C.S. SAN MIGUEL COUNTY  
1882  
DRAWN BY W. H. HARRIS

MILLS-CLEGG HOUSE.  
North Elevation.  
Springer, New Mexico  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey.  
New Mexico State  
Records Center  
and Archives.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF LAS VEGAS, N.M. 1882  
New Mexico State Records Center and Archives

and when successive additions were made. Sanborn maps can be found at UNM's Zimmerman Library, and the State Library and State Records Center in Santa Fe.

## ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS AND "STOCK PLANS"

Most historic buildings in New Mexico were constructed without architectural drawings. Local builders learned their trade through experience, and simply did what they knew. Also, stock plans were found in builders' guide books; these may have been followed exactly, or adapted with the carpenter's own flourishes. Even some early "prefabricated" house kits were available from the Sears and Roebuck Catalogue, and were shipped by rail to the frontier West!

If an architect did design the building, drawings may still exist. These might be found with the architectural firm in which he practiced, its successor firm, family descendants, historical or architectural libraries, or museums.

## HABS DRAWINGS

The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) was established in the 1930s to document some of the most outstanding historic buildings across the country. Detailed architectural record drawings were made of several structures in New Mexico, including a massive portfolio on Acoma Pueblo. Churches and a few private residences were also documented. Though relatively few buildings are included in the HABS series, copies of these beautiful drawings—accompanied by photographs in later years—can be found in the State Archives and Museum of New Mexico History Library in Santa Fe, as well as with some local libraries. Originals of the complete collection are kept at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., from which prints may be ordered.

Other useful graphic resources include old U.S. Geological Survey maps and abstract company maps. Old aerial photographs are scarce, but valuable, including those done in the 1930s by the Soil Conservation Service.

# PERSONAL SOURCES

People are often the greatest resource in the research of old buildings. Former owners or occupants, family members and neighbors can provide information found nowhere else. This is especially true in more remote areas, where other forms of documentation are rare and oral traditions are strong. Whether you begin with public records to find the names of previous owners, or begin with personal contacts, always try to use official records to verify exact dates, for people's memories are seldom precise in this regard. Likewise, finding the names of occupants who were not owners (for the property might have been rented or 'loaned' for extended periods) is often difficult, though easier for businesses than for houses.

## ORAL HISTORIES

People are usually pleased to share remembrances of their former home or neighborhood. When pursued in a systematic way and recorded in some fashion, this is called an *oral history*. Though people have always told stories of former times, the oral history is becoming a lively new genre in research. Guides are now available to assist in the use of this technique. Like other things discovered in this sort of research, you should consider placing your collected material in a public library or archive, so that it will be available to other historians in the future.

When undertaking an oral history, take careful notes or make audio recordings—from which you might wish to prepare a written transcript. After establishing rapport and a sense of purpose with your interview subject, you can proceed to more specific questions, and it can be great fun. It can also lead to a whole variety of other personal resources, such as *family albums* and *genealogies*. Though you might encounter an anti-social crank who slams the door in your face along the way, most people will be pleased to know that someone else shares an interest in the past of which they were part.

## FAMILY ALBUMS

Old photographs and snapshots reveal a great deal about a building, even when it is not the specific subject. Often people were photographed within or in front of their homes which then, as now, were a symbol of personal pride and identity. Archives often have excellent photographic collections, but some of the best records are found in the possession of family members. Sometimes, several volumes will cover several generations. Earlier—if not original—decorating schemes and landscaping may appear, and these can be instrumental to restoration. Specific things, such as automobiles, can be helpful in dating, and a review of fashions in dress alone can make the effort a delightful entertainment.



TEA IN THE LA FONDA PORTAL, Santa Fe, ca. 1910.  
T. Harmon Parkhurst, Museum of New Mexico (No. 543).

## SCRAPBOOKS AND MEMORABILIA

Personal possessions which are of genuine historical value often emerge in research. These could include a scrapbook dug from an old trunk by an oral history interview subject, or a shoebox of antique photographs found in the attic. Local or state historical societies might be very interested in these, may be able to assist in their preservation and cataloguing, and may also be a good place to deposit them for future use by other historians.

A few notes on the care and handling of old papers and memorabilia. First, don't throw anything away! Material which is of little use to one individual may be exactly what someone else is looking for. Handle everything carefully, for old paper is brittle. If letters or documents are bundled together, keep them together, for they may all relate to a single subject or may be the work of a single author. Store things flat in acid-free folders, and don't separate letters from their envelopes which bear dates and postmarks. Again, state or local archivists or history buffs will probably be glad to assist your effort.

## GENEALOGIES

A genealogy records a *family tree*, and some of these are hundreds of years old. Genealogies may be published in a volume, or may be the manuscript record of a single researcher. If you can locate one for an old family property, it can be very valuable, for it usually shows dates of birth and death and marriage, and the names of each individual's parents and children. Local churches also keep these kinds of records, as does the Mormon Church, with its massive genealogical library in Salt Lake City. These may be of assistance in understanding the historic transfer of property.

## THE BUILDING ITSELF

The building itself also bears evidence which can be helpful in understanding its history. The original style of construction, materials, and apparent changes—even other buildings in the neighborhood—may all prove helpful.

Beware of exact dates, however, for sometimes old building materials—such as windows, doors or roof beams—might have been re-used in new construction. Try to correlate observations of the building itself with other records, and be sure to save samples of anything you might uncover, such as old wallpaper, tiles, nails, etc.

### ARCHITECTURAL STYLE AND PERIOD

Take a good, long look at the building. To what architectural style and period does it seem to belong? Remember, particularly in remote rural areas, stylistic trends tended to last longer than in towns, and distinguishing features may be very scarce, for most of New Mexico's historic buildings are very simple in character. Also, elements of various styles may be mixed, even in original construction. Historic architectural styles in the Southwest will be better understood after consulting any of the books on the Reading List.

A serious look at materials and architectural details will also help date a building and any later modifications. For example, mill-sawn lumber was not available in New Mexico before the Territorial period, and factory-milled trim mouldings generally not before the railroad era. At the same time, hand-fabrication of lumber shapes was employed well into the 20th century in all but the larger towns. Minor buildings, such as storage rooms or barns, may reveal older, unaltered styles of construction; because they were less visible, it was perhaps less important to keep them looking 'up-to-date.'

### ADDITIONS AND CHANGES

Sometimes additions or changes will be immediately apparent—such as a pitched roof added over an existing flat earth roof, or a cement block room with aluminum windows alongside an older adobe house with wood-sash, double-hung windows. If done with greater sensitivity to the historic building, later additions or changes may be harder to detect, however.

Old single-file (one-room wide) adobe houses, in particular, usually began with few rooms and grew over time. Even though the architectural style might be consistent, if plaster is removed at the corners, a pattern of growth can often be seen in the way adobe walls are bonded: overlapping bonded corners generally mean that two adjacent walls were built at once, whereas new construction was usually simply butted into existing walls.

Other features to check include foundations (concrete, stone or none!), floors (sometimes finished adobe floors are found beneath newer wood), fireplaces, ceilings, and roof decking. Especially on the interior, the 'shadow' or 'ghost' of features now removed—such as a stairway or fireplace—can be found. Renovation or restoration work is bound to reveal more, as newer finishes are stripped away.

### NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT AND LANDSCAPING

Clues to a building's history can also emerge through an evaluation of other buildings in the vicinity or through landscape features. Comparison with other buildings of known date, or the presence of certain 'dated' historic materials—such as window or porch post types—can help establish the time period of construction. Perhaps the trademarks of a particular local carpenter will appear. Likewise, landscape features, such as old roads, train tracks, ruined foundation walls, *acequias*, and old trees and orchards, can lend understanding to the sequence of events and usage.



CARLOS VIERRA HOUSE, Santa Fe  
Museum of New Mexico (No. 10557)



# STYLES

## New Mexico's Historic Architectural Styles

New Mexico has the oldest building heritage in the United States, with one of its towns—Acoma Pueblo—founded perhaps more than 700 years ago. Despite early settlement by the Spaniards, substantial change did not begin until the mid 19th century, and more intensely after the arrival of the railroad around 1880.

Following is an outline of the most visible styles on the built landscape today. The names and approximate dates of the various historic styles are those used by the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division.

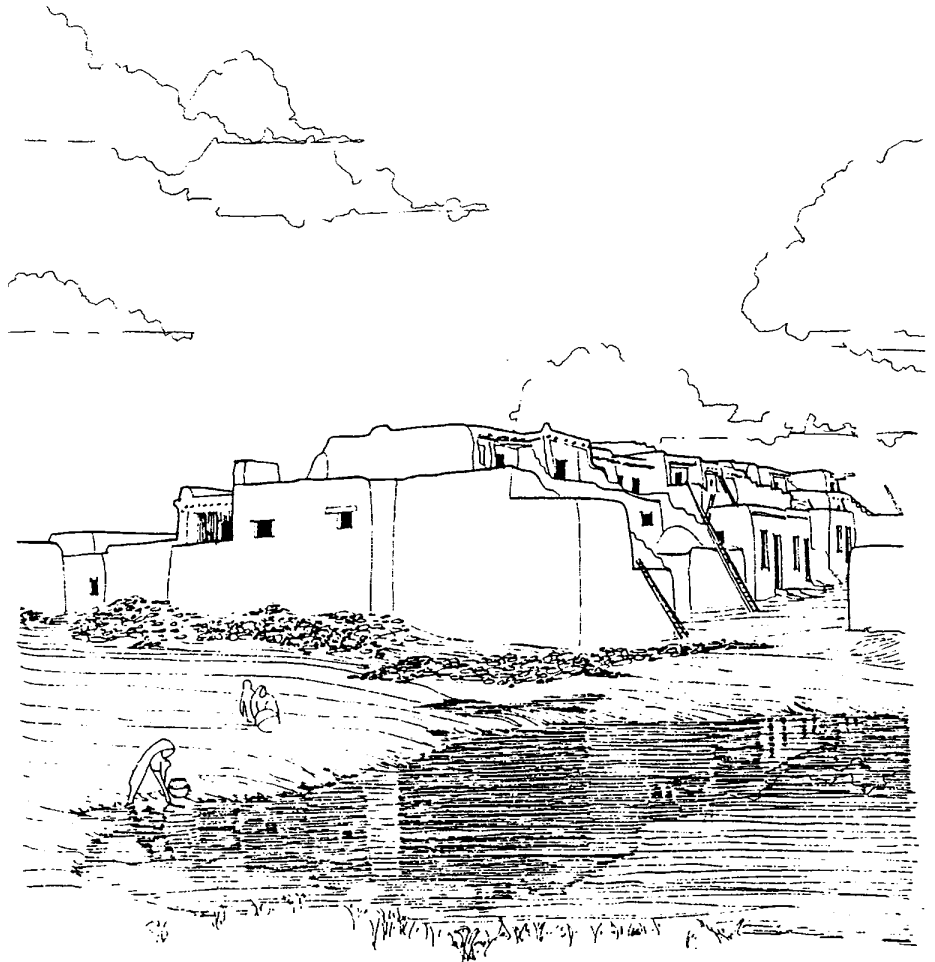
## NATIVE STYLES

### *PUEBLO INDIAN (late prehistoric-1930)*

There is virtually no 'pure' Pueblo Indian architecture anymore, as Pueblo buildings have been modified by every other ensuing style of construction. It is, however, the oldest surviving architecture, and has made a substantial impact on the character of regional building since.

Pueblo Indian buildings were made with puddled (hand-packed) *adobe* or stone walls, and flat earth roofs carried on peeled log beams (*vigas*). Like later Spanish Colonial construction, separate houses were built with shared, adjoining walls; but unlike Spanish towns, Pueblo Indian towns were usually built to two or more stories in height, terracing back on upper levels to provide useful outdoor space on the rooftops.

Other features of traditional Pueblo Indian architecture include wooden ladders, chimney pots, and underground ceremonial rooms, or *kivas*. Mission churches and domed outdoor baking ovens—both introduced by the Spaniards—are also evident in New Mexico's historic Indian pueblos.



PUEBLO INDIAN  
Acoma Pueblo, after ca. AD 1200

### SPANISH COLONIAL STYLE (1620-1900)

The Spanish Colonial Style is similar to Pueblo Indian architecture in many respects, with some important differences. Earth or stone (and sometimes log) walls, with flat earth roofs supported on peeled-log *vigas* continued the Pueblo tradition of construction.

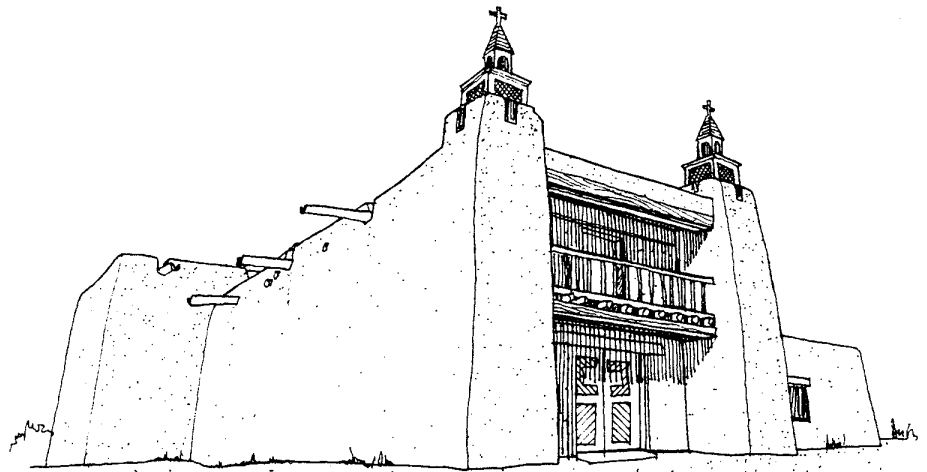
The introduction of metal tools by the Spanish colonists made dressed wood details possible. These are seen in primitive doors, window frames and grills. Colonnaded porches, or *portales*, the forming of adobe into bricks, and the larger interior spaces of churches were also Spanish innovations. Most rooms were limited to about fifteen feet in width—the reasonable span of a *viga*. Rooms were linked in a long single file, one story high, often around a courtyard, or *placita*. Each room was essentially self-contained, and opened to the outside.

Though most surviving buildings have been modified by the addition of windows and larger doors, early buildings had very few and small openings. Hallmark features of the Spanish Colonial Style are mud-plastered walls, (often cement stuccoed over in this century), flat roofs, and frequently, projecting *vigas* and *canales* (rain-spouts).

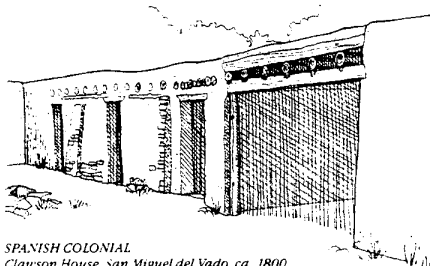
### TERRITORIAL STYLE (1846-1890)

The Territorial Style flourished with the influence of pioneer American settlement in New Mexico, especially between the end of the Civil War and the arrival of the railroad around 1880. As with most other styles, it lingered on later in more remote areas. The availability of new materials—such as mill-sawn lumber, glass, bricks, corrugated and terne plate metal—contributed to the style's popularity. Most evident, however, was the infusion of elements from the fashionable Greek Revival Style of the East, both in new buildings and in modifications to existing buildings.

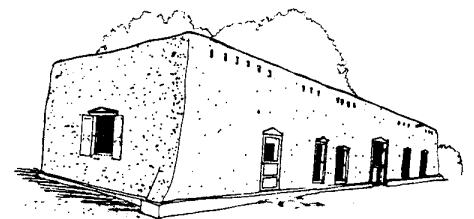
Local building materials continued to be used, but new features included square porch columns, often with applied mouldings, triangular pedimented door and window frames, and brick 'denticulated' (toothed) cornices on parapet walls. Pitched roofs became common in the north, but flat roofs continued to be built. A new type of floor plan also appeared, with rooms opening onto a central hallway, introducing a more squarish building plan than that found among Spanish Colonial predecessors.



SPANISH COLONIAL  
San Jose de Gracia Mission Church, Trampas, ca. 1760



SPANISH COLONIAL  
Clauson House, San Miguel del Vado, ca. 1800



EARLY TERRITORIAL  
Barela de Bledsue House, Albuquerque, ca. 1850



TERRITORIAL  
Fort Union: Quartermaster's Headquarters, 1866  
Museum of New Mexico (No. 1828)



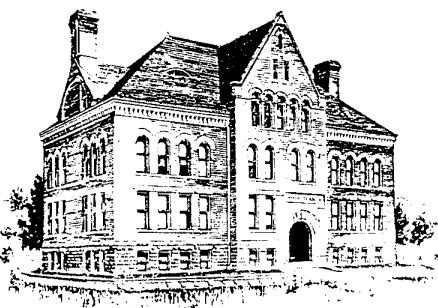
GOTHIC REVIVAL  
Loretto Chapel, Santa Fe, 1878



ITALIANATE BRACKETED  
Hesselden House, Albuquerque, 1882



MANSARD  
With House, Albuquerque, ca. 1910



RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE  
Hodgin Hall, UNM, Albuquerque, 1890



QUEEN ANNE  
McQuade House, Albuquerque, ca. 1905

# R RAILROAD PERIOD STYLE

The railroad was a mainline for the introduction of various Eastern styles into the Frontier West. Some of the more popular are listed below:

## GOTHIC REVIVAL (1860-1910)

Gothic Revival was occasionally used in church buildings before the arrival of the railroad around 1880. Later, it sometimes appeared in houses. Hallmark features are towers and steeples, steeply pitched roofs, pointed (Gothic) arches, and trefoil and quatrefoil (3- and 4-leaf) cutouts or windows.

## ITALIANATE BRACKETED STYLE (1880-1900)

Both residential and commercial buildings were constructed in this High Victorian style. A wide variety of detail is typical, but the keynote is the use of ornate brackets of wood or pressed metal, especially under eaves and on porches.

## MANSARD STYLE (1880-1900)

This style of the French Second Empire bears one primary feature: a mansard roof, with its distinctive double-pitched profile. Plans are usually symmetrical, and rich ornamentation often borrows from the Bracketed and Queen Anne styles.

## RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE (1880-1910)

Henry Hobson Richardson's unique interpretation of the Romanesque style, from the 1870's, is seen occasionally in diluted form in commercial and public buildings of the late 19th century in New Mexico. It can be identified by heavy, usually asymmetrical massing in stone or brick, round arches, short towers and clusters of deeply recessed windows.

## QUEEN ANNE (1880-1910)

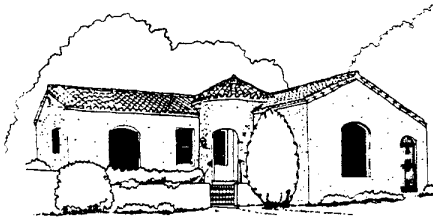
The ornamental appearance of Queen Anne building features a variety of shapes, textures, materials and colors. Projecting bays, 'sunburst' patterned gable ends, a diversity of windows, towers, and almost always an elaborate spindle-work wood porch, exemplify the style.



*SIMPLIFIED ANNE*  
Coons House, Albuquerque, ca. 1884



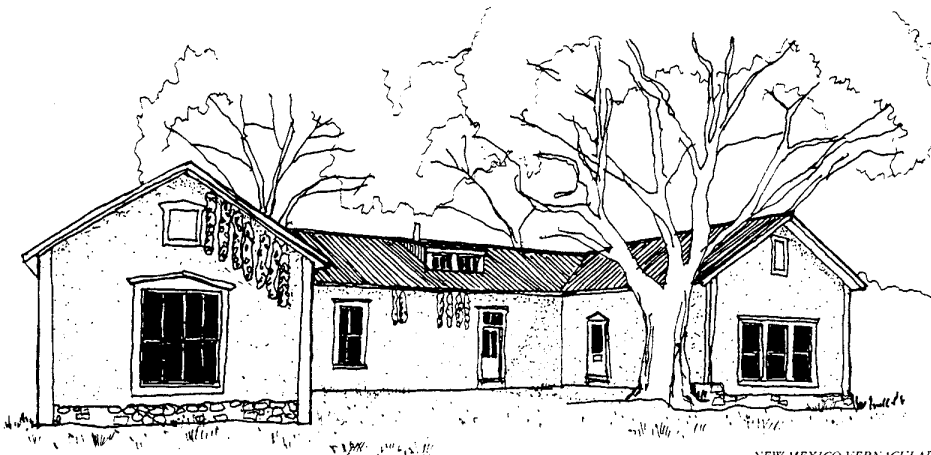
*WORLD'S FAIR CLASSIC*  
Weinman-Breece House, Albuquerque, ca. 1906



*MEDITERRANEAN*  
Spruce Park District, Albuquerque, 1931



*OTHER REVIVAL STYLES*  
Whittlesey House, Albuquerque, 1903



*NEW MEXICO VERNACULAR*  
Rancho de Chimayo, Chimayo, ca. 1893-1906

### *SIMPLIFIED ANNE (1880-1910)*

More frequently seen in New Mexico than the fully developed Queen Anne style is a smaller, cottage-scale version: 'Simplified Anne.' Steeply pitched roofs, usually with an asymmetrical front gable, and some porch woodwork suggest the Queen Anne, but with simple means. Houses are of brick or frame, and often include Territorial style doors and windows.

### *WORLD'S FAIR CLASSIC (1895-1930)*

This style derives its name from Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893, where revived elements of Greek and Roman architecture replaced Victorian decoration. Symmetrical facades, big pedimented porches, neoclassic columns and cornices all typify the style, seen mostly on public buildings and a few large houses in New Mexico.

### *MEDITERRANEAN STYLE (1910-present)*

This style is sometimes hard to tell from Mission Revival, for it also uses smooth stuccoed walls with arched openings and tile roofs; but it does not feature the great curvilinear gables of the Mission. Mediterranean Style also employs ironwork and other decorative embellishment in its effort at picturesque detailing.

### *OTHER REVIVAL STYLES (1880-present)*

Almost every style of note—Tudor, Dutch Colonial, Romanesque, even Islamic and Egyptian—appeared in Revival form around the turn of the century. A few examples of most of these can be found in New Mexico. Some buildings, however, defy any classification! New Mexico is possessed of one Scandinavian log villa, one English Medieval castle, one onion-domed Byzantine adobe, and just about anything else the imaginative builder could devise.

### *NEW MEXICO VERNACULAR (1880-1930)*

This is a general name for a variety of details applied to simple native structures by folk-builders. The styles of particular elements may include Territorial (pedimented window and door casings, square columns), Queen Anne (turned spindles and columns), Gothic Revival (scroll-cut 'gingerbread' trim), and others. Many buildings in the state—particularly in rural areas—represent this casually mixed character. ■

# AMERICAN STYLES

Beginning around 1900, distinctive new forms of architecture were emerging which were wholly American. Most of them can be found in New Mexico.

## THE PRAIRIE STYLE (1900-1920)

Growing out of the works of Frank Lloyd Wright and a few others, the Prairie School diverged from late 19th Century eclecticism in its elimination of ornament. The building form itself generates the decoration. Strong horizontal lines are created by widely overhanging eaves and wood banding above and below strips of windows. The best examples of this style are found in the midwestern United States.

## HIPPED BOX (1900-1920)

The name is descriptive of a straightforward style everyone recognizes throughout the West. Built from "pattern book" plans, the one or two-story square house is covered by a large hipped roof, giving a sense of solidness and simple dignity. Gabled dormers and porches on the front are symmetrically composed and decorative elements are few.

## THE BUNGALOW / CRAFTSMAN STYLE (1905-1935)

The Bungalow is a one (or one-and-one-half) story house with a low-pitched gabled roof, a form which came to New Mexico from California. A large porch with tapered masonry and/or wood piers and exposed rafters is usually present. Also known as the American Craftsman style, natural materials and simple hand-crafted details are evident inside and out.

## ART DECO (1927-1945)

'Skyscraper Style' as witnessed in New York is seldom seen in New Mexico; however, a few buildings here—almost all commercial—have the same embellished geometric decoration which characterizes this big-city style. Also seen are tapering setbacks and an infusion of American Indian designs into the decoration: "Pueblo Deco!"

## STREAMLINED MODERNE (1930-1950)

A styled-up American version of the International Style, Streamlined Moderne buildings have virtually no ornamentation. Instead, expression is achieved through pure form and material, usually white stucco with a flat roof, glass block and metal-frame windows. Rounded corners or corner windows further enhance the technical image of streamlining. These features are sometimes combined with the Spanish-Pueblo and Territorial Revivals for rather interesting results.



PRAIRIE STYLE  
Spitz House, Albuquerque, 1910



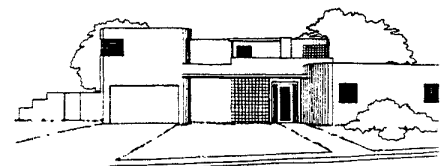
HIPPED BOX  
Fourth Ward Historic District, Albuquerque, 1906



ART DECO  
KiMo Theater, Albuquerque, 1922



BUNGALOW/CRAFTSMAN  
Fourth Ward Historic District, Albuquerque, 1921



STREAMLINED MODERNE  
Raabe 'Kelvinator' House, Albuquerque, 1933

# REGIONAL REVIVAL STYLES

Beginning in the late 19th Century, a variety of historic architectural styles of the greater Southwest were seized upon as sources for Revival styles which survive to this day.

## MISSION REVIVAL (1890-1930)

This architectural style was derived from the historic Spanish missions of Arizona, Texas and California. The most distinguishing features of the Mission Revival are curvilinear parapets or gable ends, smooth-stuccoed walls, low red tile roofs, and round-arched loggias. Absent are the stone and ironwork which might otherwise make it 'Mediterranean.' Simplified versions are often seen in early 20th Century neighborhoods (see 'Southwest Vernacular').

## SPANISH-PUEBLO REVIVAL (1905-present)

The Spanish-Pueblo Revival borrows from Indian and early Spanish architecture in New Mexico. These are the cardinal rules of the style: adobe (or adobe-colored) walls, flat roofs, sloping buttresses, irregular massing, rough-hewn wood lintels, and round log columns and *vigas*. Other neo-primitive details include wooden *canales* (rain-spouts), hewn column capitals, ladders and grills.

## SPANISH COLONIAL BAROQUE REVIVAL (1915-1950)

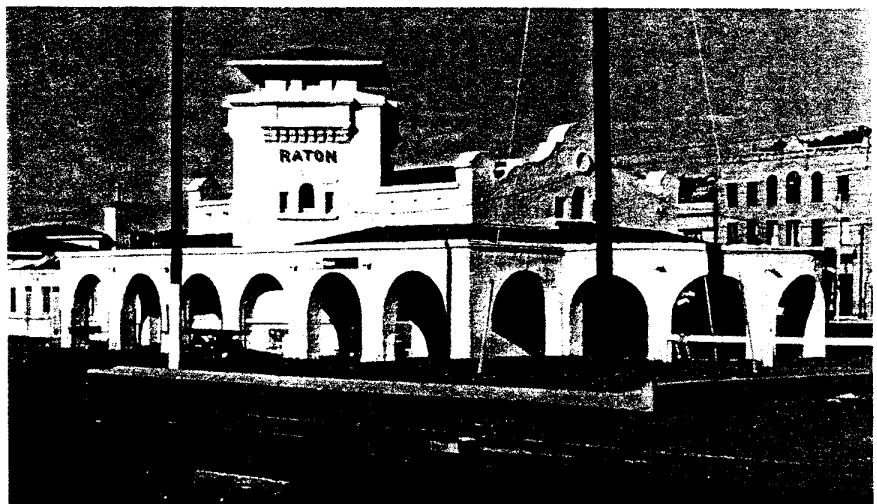
Eighteenth and 19th century mission churches elsewhere in the Southwest and Mexico inspired this style, which features areas of highly elaborated, textured detail against broad flat surfaces. Originated for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, relatively few examples of the style are seen in New Mexico.

## TERRITORIAL REVIVAL (1925-present)

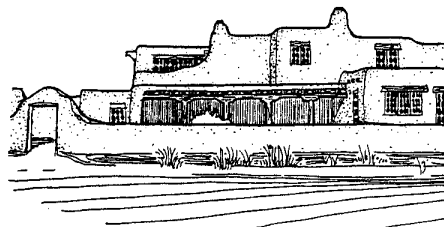
As in frontier Territorial, this style borrows simple elements from the Greek Revival and applies them to adobe-style buildings; few, however, are actually adobe beneath the brown stucco. The Territorial Revival is seen in houses and larger commercial, institutional and governmental buildings. Its hallmark features are squared columns, pedimented windows, and brick copings on flat roofed buildings—though pitched metal roofs are sometimes seen on houses.

## SOUTHWEST VERNACULAR (1910-present)

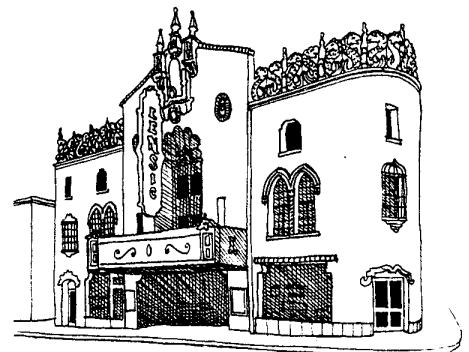
This is a folk-housing style which sparingly incorporates elements of any of the Regional Revivals. Absent is the deliberate detailing and design planning evident in other styles. Often only a single feature, such as a curved parapet, identifies the style as regional. Though modest, many of these buildings lend true character to the architectural landscape of New Mexico.



MISSION REVIVAL  
Raton Train Station, 1906



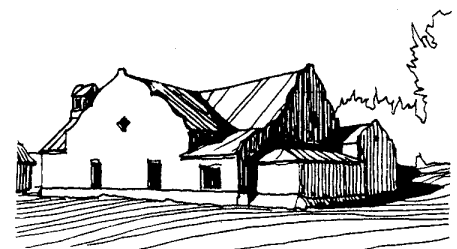
SPANISH-PUEBLO REVIVAL  
Carlos Vierra House, Santa Fe, 1917



SPANISH COLONIAL BAROQUE REVIVAL  
The Lensic Theater, Santa Fe, 1930



TERRITORIAL REVIVAL  
John Simms House, Albuquerque, 1936



SOUTHWEST VERNACULAR  
Lumberton Church

# DOCUMENTATION

PUTTING THE RESEARCH  
TOGETHER

## WHY DOCUMENT?

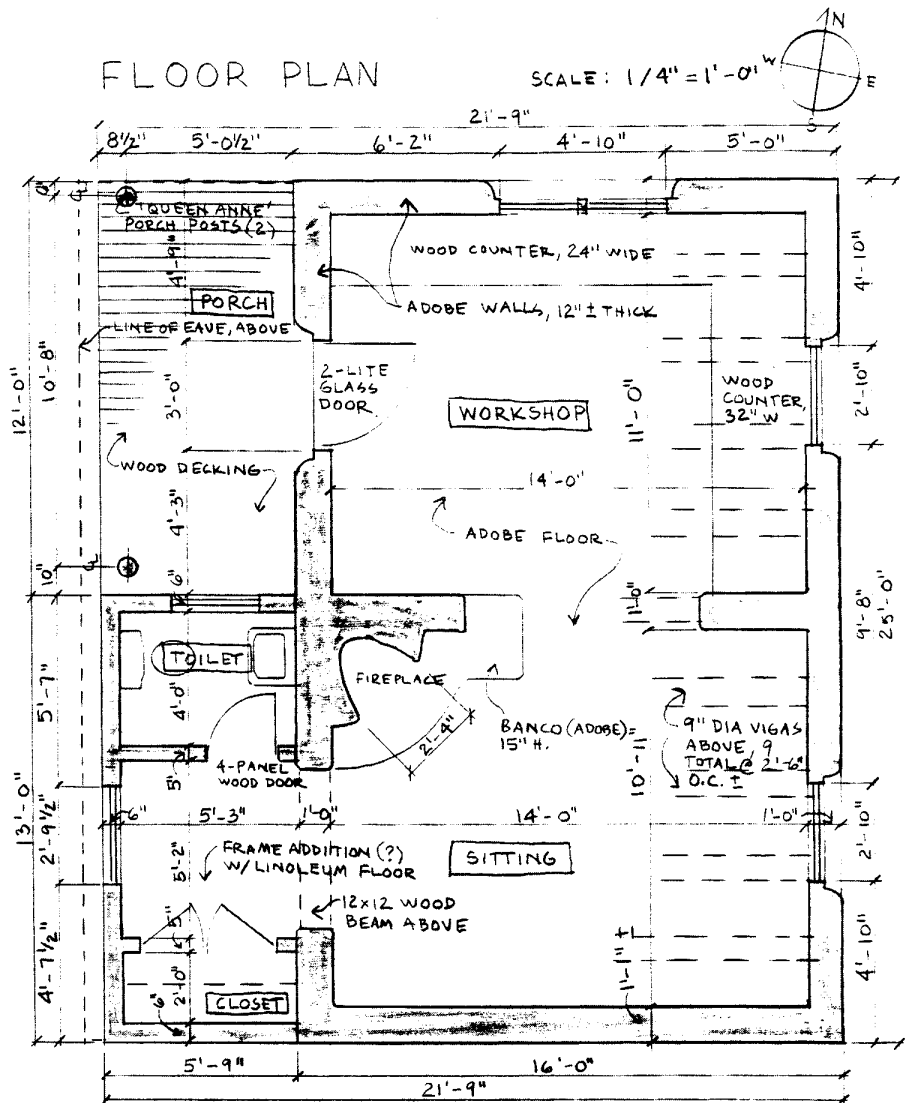
Keeping a graphic record of a building is an important part of the work involved in research, particularly if any restoration is planned. Two kinds of documentation—a measured plan and photographs—are described here. They will help you keep a record of what is already in place, whether historic original construction or later alterations. These graphic tools are also useful for keeping track of features to be retained or restored, or planning remodeling changes.

## HOW TO DRAW A FLOOR PLAN

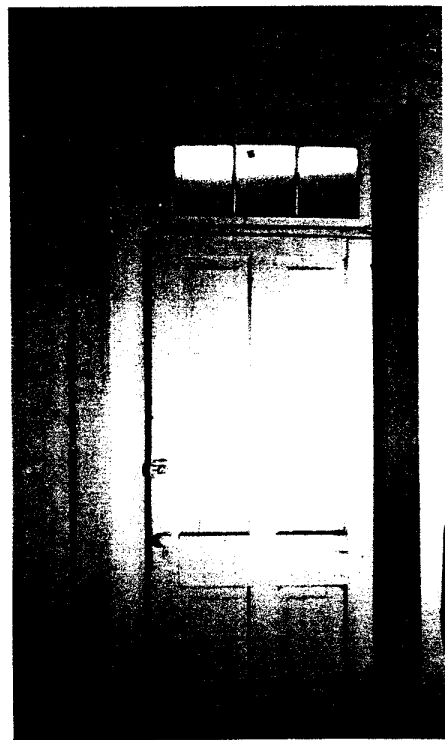
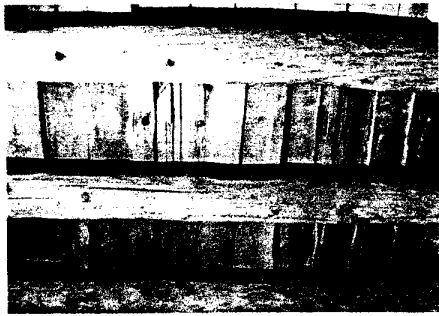
A measured plan is not difficult to make, and is an excellent tool in planning renovation or restoration work. Two people with a tape measure and clipboard are all that is necessary, plus some large paper on which to make the finished plan.

For most buildings, a scale of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " equaling one foot is good (one inch on your drawing will equal four feet in the building). Start with a sketch of the plan, then write in the dimensions as you gather them. Be sure to measure consecutively from one point to avoid accumulating small errors; check incremental dimensions to make sure they add up! Then, using an architectural scale or a simple ruler, these can be transferred to an accurately scaled plan drawing on a larger sheet. Include overall dimensions as well as those of particular features such as doors, as shown in the example.

Indicate the scale of the drawing and the direction of north on the plan. An overall site plan, with trees and other features, may also be made, perhaps at a smaller scale. Some elements, such as fireplaces, may need to be drawn at a larger scale, such as  $\frac{1}{2}$ " or 1" equals one foot. *Elevations*, or frontal views of the overall building or individual elements of special interest may also be desired.



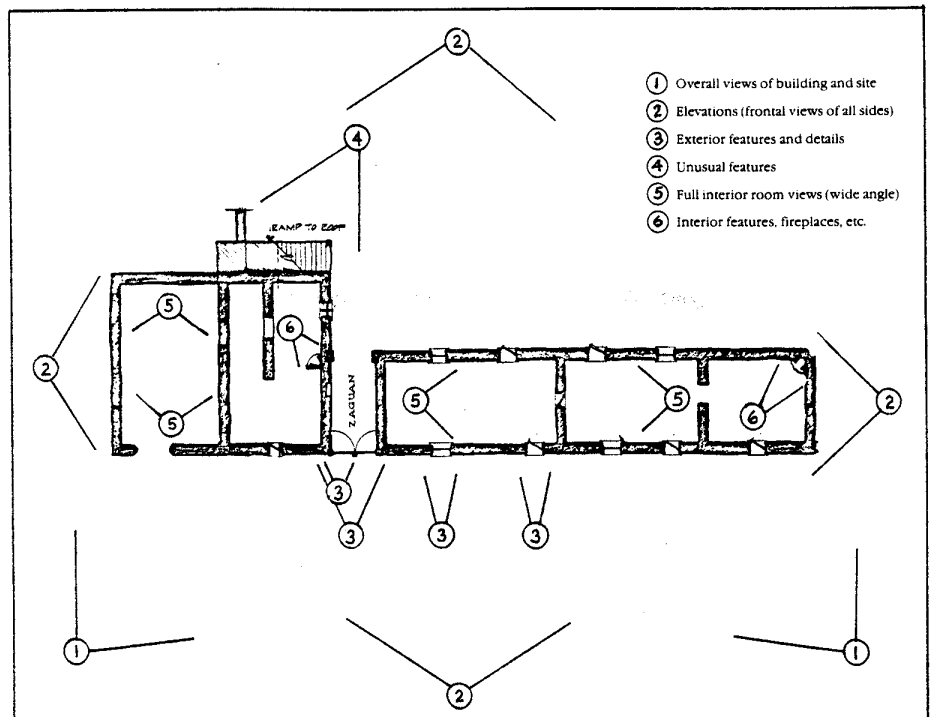
*Drawing a floor plan of an existing building is not difficult. Measure and dimension it in this fashion, noting materials and interesting detail.*



## PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

Photographs are an excellent method of documentation. They can be done in color or black-and-white, and almost anyone with a camera can achieve satisfactory results. A wide-angle lens will be helpful for interiors. Get photographs of the overall building on the site, and clear shots of each of the elevations. A slightly overcast day is better than bright sunshine, as shadows can obscure important details.

Also get detail shots of any features which are important or distinctive, such as the front door or porch posts. Don't overlook the interior, and any special features there, such as fireplaces. A very fast film, flash or artificial lighting may be required for interior shots. The accompanying photographs show some of the kinds of images you will want to record. ■



Camera placement for documentary photography, shown for the Horace Long House, Ranchitos de Taos.

Documentary photographs are used to record the overall building, important details, and even deteriorated areas. Here, a band-adzed ceiling, a Territorial period door, and a wall eroded above its stone footing.



# CASE STUDIES

Discovering the history of a building involves some work, but it can be exciting and fun as well. Like unravelling the clues in a mystery story, there are always surprises, and interesting coincidences appear to support or demolish your theories.

Following are two historic research case studies, one in an urban area and one in a rural area. Very different kinds of information usually emerge in these two situations, as witnessed here. One was researched by the owners themselves, the other by a professional who was preparing historic register nomination papers. These studies should help you to understand the kind of resources your detective work might turn up, and how these resources can be put together to arrive at some conclusions.

## QUEEN ANNE IN THE CITY

A family bought a nice, old, two-story Queen Anne style house in the Huning Highlands area of Albuquerque. They were, of course, curious about the history of their house. One day, while visiting with neighbors and looking at old photographs, they saw a picture of their neighbor's house, with their own house in the background. At least it *should* have been their house, but the front had only one story, and it looked very different from the house they presently owned.

The date of the early photograph was uncertain, and there were no clues, such as old automobiles, to help establish the time period. But it was obvious that some major changes had been made to their house since then. Checking old Sanborn Insurance Maps in the map room of Zimmerman Library at UNM revealed some important facts: neither the house—nor the platted neighborhood—appeared on a map dated 1893. It first appeared—on the edge of town—in the map of 1898, probably indicating it had been initially built during that 5-year interval. It was shown to be 1½ stories high, and had a porch to the northeast. Bernalillo County tax records were consulted, and showed a jump in value from \$200 in 1895 to \$1,200 in 1896, so the house seemed to have been built in 1895.

The house appeared again in a 1902 Sanborn map as 1½ stories. But by the date of the next map—1908—it had been enlarged to 2 stories, including the front porch. They knew that major changes had been made during that 6-year period.



*The A. B. McMillen House in Albuquerque. The house in the foreground is obviously the subject of this historic photograph, but the McMillen House appears in the background to the right. At this time—probably before 1908—the house is only 1½ stories high*



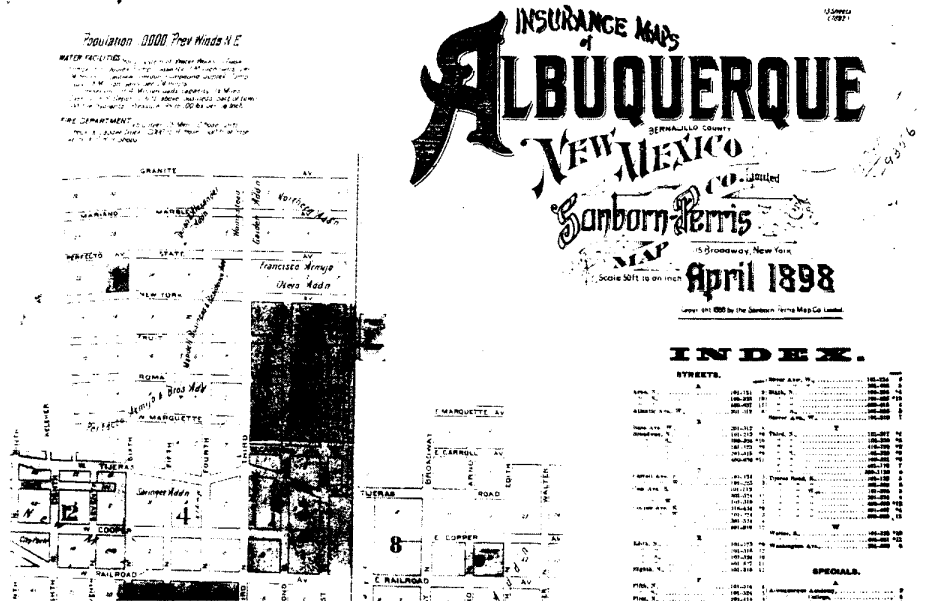
*The McMillen House in 1984, from the same camera position. Sometime between 1902 and 1908, a full second story was added when the house was enlarged.*

Again, between maps of 1908 and 1913, substantial additions were made to the garage at the rear of the property and a one story building in the yard had been removed. Although particulars at the back of the house varied from map to map, including a variety of small porch configurations, these can probably be attributed to inaccuracy in mapping, and not actual changes. This might be verified by close examination of that part of the building.

While cleaning and insulating the attic, another clue appeared: an old newspaper, dated 1911, was found beneath the baseboard. While it could have been placed there later, it almost certainly could not have appeared *before* 1911, and, therefore, this seemed to conflict with the 1902-08 dating suggested by the Sanborn maps for the second story addition. The owners think that not all of the second story was built at the same time. Perhaps rooms had been added or finished as the family grew.

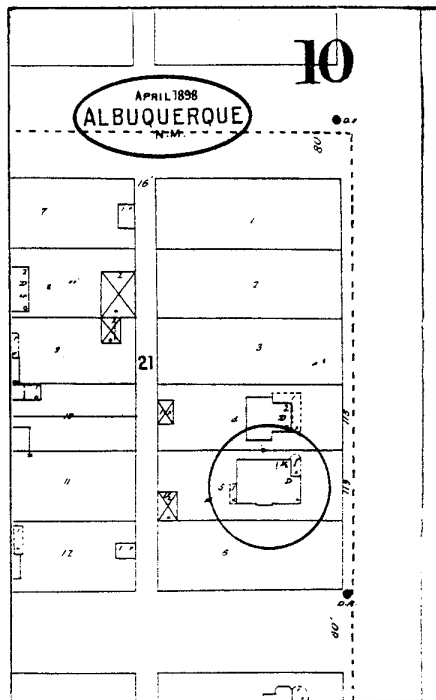
In the process of researching the chain of title, a deed was found which showed the house had probably been built by Alonzo B. McMillen. Mentioned in several histories of Albuquerque, Mr. McMillen was a prominent citizen, founder of Occidental Life Insurance Company, and in 1908, President of the New Mexico Bar Association.

A close look at the building construction itself, from the basement to the attic, provided further clues as to what had been original, and where additions had been made. When layers of paint were scraped back, original colors and wallpapers were found, and the owners now had much of the information they needed for a good restoration. With technical briefs provided by the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, they knew *how* to do a great deal of the work themselves.

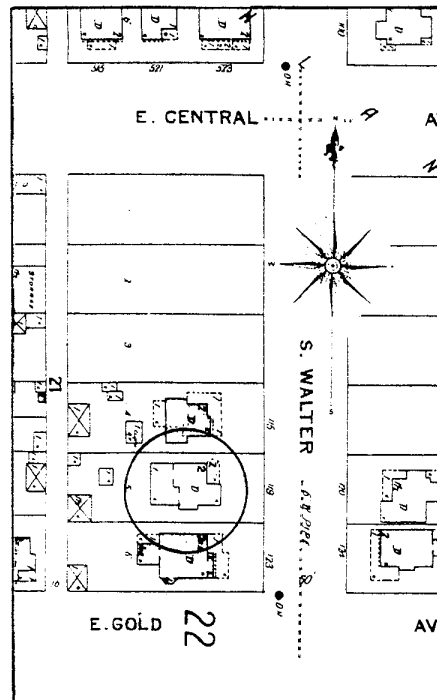


This series of details from Sanborn Insurance Maps helped date the initial construction and expansion of the house (in circle). The house first appears on the 1898 map, and is still shown as 1 1/2 stories on a map of 1902. By 1908 it is shown as 2 full stories. Between 1908 and 1913 major construction was completed on a building at the rear of the site. New Mexico State Library.

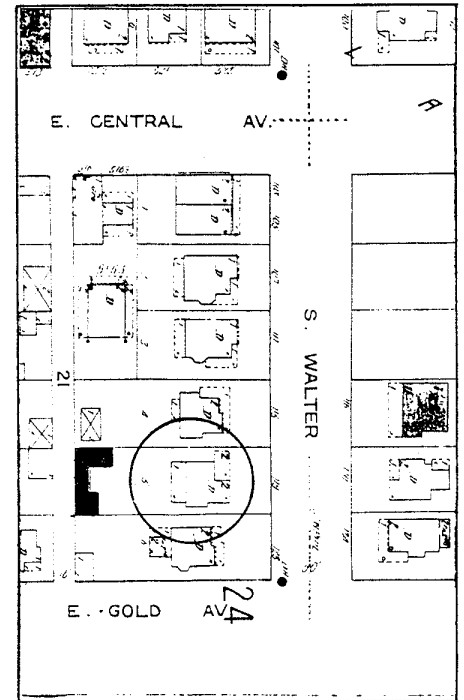
1898



1908



1913



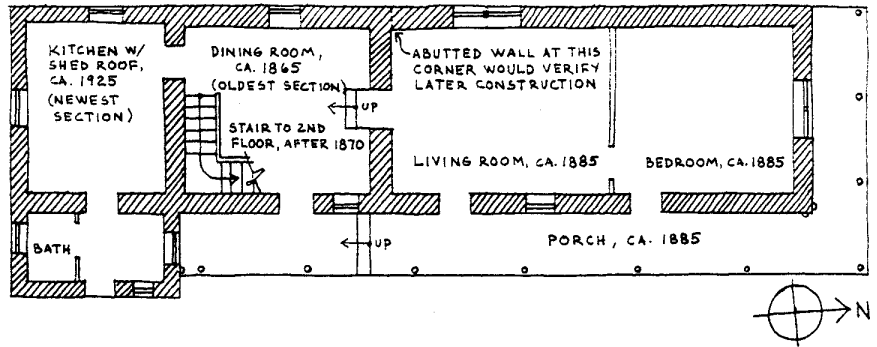
# NORTH COUNTRY VERNACULAR

In rural areas, the types of resources available for historic research are rather different from those for buildings in major towns. Because official records are few, a great deal more is discerned through evaluation of the building itself—its style and materials in particular—and, if you are lucky, oral history. Some specialized resources, such as published local histories and Historic District nominations, may also be helpful. In any case, the Historic Preservation Division will be invaluable for consultation.

The Belarmino Valdez House in Los Ojos, Rio Arriba County, is typical of the distinctive kind of construction found in the Tierra Amarilla vicinity; a single-file (one room wide) adobe house with pitched metal roof continuous over a colonnaded porch. The first precise record of the house is a 1935 Soil Conservation Service aerial photograph, though the house was certainly not new then.

The Los Ojos area was first settled by Spanish-Americans around 1860. As elsewhere, small, one-story single-file houses were built, to which rooms were added over time, each opening to the outside. After about 1870, the influence of Anglo-American styles appeared in symmetrically composed facades, entry hall and interior circulation, and Folk Territorial door and window trim.

The absence of this organized plan and facade suggested that at least some of the Valdez House predates the 1870s. This was confirmed by local oral history, compiled by a neighbor who had talked to all the old-timers in the vicinity. It was also discovered that the single room house had functioned as an illegal drinking establishment during the days of Fort Lowell (1865-1869), one mile to the south! A variety of window types—each available and popular at different times—also suggested incremental growth, as did the fact that two of the rooms step to the grade of the site—an unlikely design if the house had been built all at once.



*Plan of the Valdez House, Los Ojos, Tierra Amarilla County. Studying the floor plan, construction materials, details, and oral history helps establish the sequence of growth of the house.*

Attic bedrooms, dormer windows and interior stairs were also introduced in the area in the 1870s, and most houses, including this one, now have them. A distinctive feature of the Valdez House is the Queen Anne style turned porch posts with wooden scrollwork brackets. These were available through the railroad town of Chama between 1880 and 1905. Together with the popularity of corrugated metal roofing after about 1880, this helped date development of the second floor and the essential architectural form of the house. Perhaps further examination will reveal earlier wood shingles beneath the metal roofing. A shed roofed kitchen and bathroom were added at the rear of the house around 1925, as related by elder members of the family. Examination of a property abstract might help confirm some of these dates, most of which are inferred through the architecture of the building itself and by oral history, rather than by actual historic documentation.

While exact dates for original construction and additions to the Valdez House may never be known, research has revealed the approximate time periods for most phases of its construction and historic evolution. It is now part of a National Historic District, and is worthy of a serious preservation effort.



*The Valdez House is typical of New Mexico Vernacular style building: a Spanish Colonial style single-file building, Territorial-style door and window casings, pitched metal roof, and Queen Anne style porch.*



*Porch posts and brackets such as these were commercially available in the Tierra Amarilla area between 1880 and 1905. These features were helpful in dating the building, and the historic chronology of change.*

*The Leandro Martinez House, Ranchitos de Taos. Built during the Territorial period, the carpenter scrollwork frieze along the top of the colonnaded porch was probably a later addition, reflecting the influence of Railroad-era styles. The house is now completely demolished. Museum of New Mexico (No. 11480).*

#### FURTHER READING

*The following list includes books and other publications which will be helpful in understanding the historic architecture of New Mexico.*

Blumenson, John J. *Identifying American Architecture*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977.

Bunting, Bainbridge. *Taos Adobes: Spanish Colonial and Territorial Architecture of the Taos Valley*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1964.

Bunting, Bainbridge. *Early Architecture in New Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976.

Cherry, Edith. *New Mexico Historic Building Inventory Manual*. Produced by the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division and the University of New Mexico School of Architecture; unpublished, 1979.

Dewitt, Susan, and Jonathan M. Teague. *The Old House Workbook: Rehabilitation Guidelines for Albuquerque*. Albuquerque: Neighborhood Housing Services of Albuquerque, 1980.

Iowa, Jerome. *Ageless Adobes: History and Preservation in Southwestern Architecture*. Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1985.

Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture since 1780*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1969.



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